

Remarks

Claims 1-8 are pending in the present application. By this reply, claims 9 and 10 have been canceled.

The specification and claims have been amended to improve their form and to correct minor informalities according to U.S. practice. These modifications do not add new matter.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 1-8 are allowed over the prior art of record. These claims have been amended only to improve form to provide clarity.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Rejection

Claims 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Stokes et al. Without acquiescing to any of the Examiner's allegations made in rejecting these claims, to expedite prosecution only, these claims have been canceled, thereby rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn. Further, the cancellation of claims 9 and 10 places the application in condition for allowance.

Information Disclosure Statement filed

The Examiner is respectfully requested to return an initialed PTO-1449 Form submitted in the IDS filed concurrently herewith.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and to provide an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

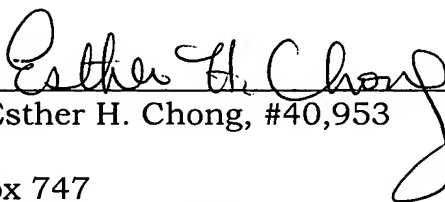
Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees

required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly,
extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By  _____
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EHC:sld

Attachment: Abstract of the Disclosure